

CROSSWAY COMMUNITY CHURCH

Congregational Letter
September 2011



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Letter from Pastor Mike

Dear CrossWay Family,

I want to tell you a bit more fully about my sabbatical, largely out of my desire to be accountable to you, but also simply to share with you what was going on in my life during the months of July and August. As I mentioned a few Sundays ago, the five “Rs” served as a very useful structure during that time. I was able to run more consistently than I have since college—I logged close to 300 miles. I read widely and deeply—right around 3500 pages—for both personal and vocational development. Much of that reading was deeply stirring and, I believe, formative. A lengthy biography of D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones stands out in particular. God has already put much of this reading to use fueling vision and ideas in multiple areas of ministry. We had sweet times of relating together as a family. God was very kind in supplying a variety of contexts for this that included getting away, but also included much time just being together at home. That was especially meaningful in anticipation of Abby’s departure for Wheaton College. The entire sabbatical was a time of productive reflection. I tend toward this naturally, but there were particular opportunities for extended reflection on my own spiritual health, on the health of our church and on where God might want us to grow going forward. And yes, I did rest. The basic purpose of the sabbatical was refreshment, a sort of half-time break with roughly thirteen years of pastoring here at CrossWay completed and, hopefully, by God’s strength, another thirteen or so ahead.

There are a few specific fruits of the sabbatical I want to share with you. First, times like this serve greatly to help clarify my vision regarding my calling. God stirs up in me an acutely deepened love for the ministry of preaching and teaching, as well as an acutely deepened desire to be faithful in it. I’m very grateful for this calling and want to make sure that the press of other things doesn’t compromise my faithfulness in it. I return from sabbatical with a renewed commitment to devote more time to preparing for teaching and preaching including setting aside time for higher level reading. I also return feeling more strongly the need for my preparation and actual preaching to be accompanied more by prayer.

Second, the sabbatical has demonstrated again what a remarkably able and solid team of pastors and elders we have at CrossWay. I have had a deep love and respect for these men for years now, but I come off of this sabbatical with a new appreciation for their gifts and a greatly strengthened gratitude for their commitment to this work of equipping and caring for you that God has called us to do together.



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...Letter from Pastor Mike (continued)

Third, this sabbatical has served to elevate my joy in being a part of this church family. I want you to know that I am very grateful to be a part of this church. Often the suggestion is made to pastors taking sabbaticals to “get away.” I never saw the need for that and I had no desire for that. Apart from two Sundays when we were out of town, the Bullmore family was at CrossWay throughout July and August because that’s exactly where we wanted to be. We all love our church family. And every day of my sabbatical, I believe without exception, I thanked God for bringing me to this particular place and calling.

There are more things God got done through this sabbatical. I trust you will benefit from them in the days ahead. But these are some of the main things and they make me want to say “thank you” to you again for your generous provision of the sabbatical and for your encouragement and support throughout.

As always, with warm affection.

Pastor Mike

Vision for New Pastor-In-Training Position

For the past year Mark Rogers has served as a Pastoral Resident at CrossWay. His primary responsibility has been to start and administer the CrossWay Pastoral Training Course (CPTC). We are recommending Mark as a full-time Pastor-In-Training (all non-elder pastors start with this title). This would increase his hours from 20 to 45-50 per week. In addition to the CPTC, Mark would give leadership to newcomer ministry and young adult ministry (YAM).

The biggest frustration newcomers often face is the time it takes them to connect relationally at CrossWay. Over the past two ministry years we gave out 1,095 welcome packets. Let’s say that figure represents 75% of all guests (not all guests request a welcome packet), then that would mean we’ve had closer to 1,460 people visit CrossWay over the past two years. Over that same time period our average attendance has only grown by 89 net people. For several years we have wanted to do more in reaching out to and ministering to a larger percentage of our visitors.

As we stated in our May newsletter, a newcomer ministry will help us “more effectively evangelize newcomers, orient them to our values, and help them connect to our life as a church more quickly.” We envision Mark making personal contact with everyone who completes a guest card, and at times visiting those guests to personally care for them, answer their questions, and share the gospel with them. Even more strategic, we envision Mark creating a context where guests can connect relationally and begin learning CrossWay’s biblical, Gospel-centered values in a focused way. This will help them more quickly integrate into CrossWay as they await the next Vision & Values class and placement into a Care Group.

Mark is also positioned to take the CPTC to the next level as we begin mentoring and preparing participants for pastoral ministry. As part of his CPTC responsibility, we will ask Mark to help the elders think more concretely about church planting.

We trust that Mark’s preaching and pastoral gifting will add to the foundation Steve Handler laid for YAM. Our desire is to restart this ministry in strength and grow the ministry by evangelizing other young adults. Mark’s combined responsibilities will also allow him to prepare and oversee CPTC participants to share in the teaching and leadership at YAM meetings.

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...Vision for New Pastor-In-Training Position (continued)

We do believe Mark has the character, maturity and gifting to bear good fruit for CrossWay in this position. Mark has characteristics we are looking for with his strong grasp on God's word, his shepherd's heart, warmth, and approachability. In addition to his gift of preaching, Mark is strong evangelistically, administratively, and has the ability to successfully envision and launch new ministry.

We trust this is helpful to you in understanding how we are thinking about this position. As a Council of Elders, we do value your input and perspective. So we strongly encourage you to engage in the process, ask specific questions, express concerns, and encourage our thinking. Please feel free to contact us by phone, e-mail, or in person at our offices or on Sunday morning. We do desire your affirmation on October 9, but we want an affirmation marked by unity, faith, and a sense of God's goodness for CrossWay.

Budget Update

As your pastors and elders, our desire is to be responsible stewards of the support God has provided through your giving. Although there is a significant budget shortfall through the first half of September, we are full of faith that God will provide exactly what CrossWay needs. It is a privilege to serve alongside of you whatever economic climate God takes us through. With that being said, we have taken some provisional steps to meet the budget shortfall and are prepared to take additional steps if the current trend continues.

Presently we have frozen spending on current non-ministry related expenses that will reduce our current budget by \$58,000. This adjustment includes things such as the building expansion, CrossWay East provision, and the purchasing of any new building equipment. If necessary, we are prepared to make a second round of adjustments when needed. This second round would be deeper and more difficult since it would affect ministry, but we are not expecting this current trend to continue. Our expectation is that as we get into the year we will see both attendance and giving increase.

Realistically, we had the briefest glimpse of our year at the slowest time of the year. The lion's share is before us. God is still God, our loving Father and the giver of all good gifts. We will see this through together, with Christ as our Head.

New Parenting Class

Have you ever wished children came with an instruction manual? Parenting can be confusing these days, especially when there are so many different voices in our culture telling us how to raise our children. Fortunately, God hasn't left us in the dark. God's word, the Bible, gives us the practical wisdom we need for our children and our parenting.

We will be offering a new six-week series of parenting classes at CrossWay on Wednesday nights, beginning on April 18. Each evening will focus on a different stage of a child's development: toddler & preschool, elementary, middle school, high school and college. The goal of these classes is to identify biblical goals to guide you in your parenting, give practical instructions on how to parent, and build your faith in God for the task to which he has called you. Attend all six sessions or choose the ones that apply to where your children are at right now. Look for more information in early 2012.

Upcoming

Membership

Meetings:

Sundays,

Oct 9

and

Nov 20



After-School Tutoring and Nursing Home Ministries

I have been on the job as the Pastor in Training for Mercy Ministries here at Crossway for a little over two months now. I want to take the opportunity that this newsletter provides to communicate about two opportunities for mercy ministry at Crossway; one that is up and running right now, and one that I hope is in Crossway's near future.

First, I am very excited about potentially partnering with a KUSD school. At this time nothing has been finalized, but we are right now dialoguing with a school in our community about providing volunteers for things like: after-school tutoring, assisting and serving teachers during the school day, mentoring at-risk children, and seeking to meet other needs in the school community as they arise. I hope to have more information about this partnership very soon.

Second, a group of Crossway members have been ministering at the Washington Manor nursing home on Washington Avenue in Kenosha every other Thursday night for approximately four years. I recently joined them on a Thursday night and helped gather up about a dozen residents for a service where Crossway members read Scripture, led the residents in song, and shared a brief teaching from John chapter 11.

As I walked out of Washington Manor later that evening I found myself thanking God for this work. Here are two things that made me particularly grateful.

Gospel-Centeredness

Every element of the evening centered on the gospel. It was a full-fledged effort to display the glory of God and call sinners to repentance and faith in the gospel. I was so encouraged as I heard Crossway members speak of the gospel in ways that demonstrated so *clearly* that they have experienced its goodness themselves, that God has changed them through it, and that they now deeply desire to see these residents respond in faith.

Compassionate Kindness

Kindness, compassion, and tenderness characterized many of the interactions that I witnessed on this night, but I will share just one. Because one of the residents could not attend the service, afterward several of us went back to her room where we sang *Amazing Grace* and prayed with her. It was a sweet time of fellowship, marked by a tenderness that I cannot easily articulate with words on a page.

I am so very grateful for the work that God is doing through the people of Crossway.

If you are interested in possibly serving in this ministry, please contact me, Steve Handler, at the church office.

Upcoming Events

Exploring Christianity	Wednesdays Sep 21-Nov 9
Women's Friendship Teas	Oct 5 & 15
Age of Opportunity Fall Luncheon	Oct 8
Bible Doctrine 101	Saturdays Oct 8-Nov 19
Sunday Evening Gathering	Oct 9
Parent-Child Dedication	Oct 16
Vision & Values Membership Class	Oct 18 & 25
Men's Meeting	Nov 5
Discovering CrossWay	Nov 13
Thanksgiving Evening Service	Nov 20
Office Closed (Thanksgiving Holiday)	Nov 24 & 25
Women's Christmas Tea	Dec 3
Christmas Service/Guest Sunday	Dec 18
Office Closed	Dec 22, 23 & 30 (Due to Christmas & New Year's Holidays)
Men's Breakfast	Jan 14
Exploring Christianity	Wednesdays Jan 25-Mar 14
New Parenting Class	Beginning Wed's April 18

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